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Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

(57)

PAGE 01 SAN SA 02494 0217547Z 0420

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 AID-07 INR-10 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 SY-05 HA-06 P4-01 PPT-01
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2138
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2494

E.O. 12065: GDS 4-2-87 (GREENTREE, TODD R.) OR-C
TAGS: CARR PINS ES CA
SUBJECT: NATIONAL POLICE DETENTION OF CANADIAN CITIZEN MONIQUE GAUTIER

REF: SAN SALVADOR 2456

1. (U) FOR THE SECOND TIME IN SEVERAL MONTHS A RESIDENT OF LA LIBERTAD HAS DENOUNCED MONIQUE GUATIER, A CANADIAN MARINE BIOLOGIST WORKING FOR THE SALVADORAN BUREAU OF FISHERIES. THIS DENUNCIATION ALLEGES HER INVOLVEMENT IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. SHE IS CURRENTLY IN THE CUSTODY OF THE SALVADORAN NATIONAL POLICE WHO ARE INVESTIGATING THE CHARGE. EARLIER PRESS REPORTS THAT SHE HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED ARE UNFOUNDED.

2. (U) A CONSULAR OFFICER FROM THIS EMBASSY VISITED HER AND SPOKE WITH [redacted] THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 1. CANADA CURRENTLY HAS NO DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN EL SALVADOR; THE UNITED STATES HAS ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTING CANADIAN CITIZENS IN THIS COUNTRY. MS. GUATIER IS RECEIVING COURTEOUS TREATMENT FROM THE NATIONAL POLICE AT THE HEADQUARTERS IN DOWNTOWN SAN SALVADOR. SHE HAS BEEN GIVEN HER OWN ROOM WITH AN UNLOCKED DOOR, AND HER MEALS ARE SERVED INDIVIDUALLY. SHE STATES SHE HAS BEEN MISTREATED IN NO WAY AND THAT SHE WILL COOPERATE FULLY WITH THE AUTHORITIES. "WHEN THEY FIRST CAME TO MY HOUSE TO GET ME, I WAS A LITTLE AFRAID. I DION'T KNOW WHO THEY WERE AND THEY DION'T SAY AT FIRST. THEY WERE IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND HEAVILY ARMED. THEY COULD HAVE BEEN SUBVERSIVES."

[redacted] ASSURED THE CONSULAR OFFICER THAT MS. GUATIER HAS NOT BEEN FORMALLY ARRESTED. SHE IS REQUIRED TO REMAIN AT THE NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS, HOWEVER, "AS A GUEST, NOT A PRISONER," PENDING COMPLETION OF THE INVESTIGATION.

3. (U) ACCORDING TO POLICE AND OTHER SOURCES, MS. GAUTIER HAS LIVED AND WORKED IN EL SALVADOR FOR MANY YEARS. SHE IS CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES IN THE PORT CITY OF LA LIBERTAD. SHE IS IN CHARGE OF A PROJECT THERE TO DEVELOP THE LOCAL OYSTER INDUSTRY, INCLUDING ORGANIZING AN OYSTER FISHERMEN'S COOPERATIVE. CHARGES HAVE BEEN MADE BY UNKNOWN PEOPLE IN THE PAST THAT SHE AND THE LEADERS OF THE OYSTER FISHERMEN'S COOPERATIVE WERE LINKED TO SALVADORAN REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATIONS AND WERE RUNNING ARMS TO THE GUERRILLAS. THE SAME CHARGES WERE NOT SUBSTANTIATED WHEN POLICE INVESTIGATED THEM SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, SOME INDIVIDUAL OYSTER FISHERMEN HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED FOR GUNRUNNING. REPORTEDLY, MS. GAUTIER IS ALSO AN OBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE RESENTMENT AMONG THE TRADITIONAL OYSTER MERCHANTS WHO HAVE MADE A LUCRATIVE BUSINESS OF BUYING OYSTERS CHEAPLY FROM THE FISHERMEN AND SELLING THEM DEARLY TO RESTAURANTS AND MARKETS. THE OYSTER-WORKERS' COOPERATIVE HAS SUCCESSFULLY INCREASED OYSTER PRODUCTION WHILE REUDCING THE MIDDLEMEN'S SHARE OF PROFITS. FOR THIS REASON, AS MUCH AS ANY OTHER, SHE WAS DENOUNCED AND TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY THE POLICE. THEY FEEL CERTAIN HER LIFE IS IN DANGER. WHILE UNABLE TO GUARANTEE HER PERSONAL SAFETY IN LA LIBERTAD, THE POLICE HAVE ASSURED THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES THAT THEY WILL PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF THE COOPERATIVE AND HELP THE LEADERS RESIST ANY INTIMIDATION.

4. (C) [redacted] TOLD CONOFF MARCH 31 THAT HE WAS FAIRLY CERTAIN MS. GAUTIER WAS AT LEAST SYMPATHETIC TO THE CAUSE OF THE ARMED LEFT HERE. HE SAID SHE IS KNOWN TO HAVE ASSOCIATED WITH LEFTIST LABOR ORGANIZERS. THE ACCUSATION AGAINST HER THIS TIME, AS IN THE PREVIOUS CASE, LINKED HER TO CERTAIN VERY SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES--AND PROVIDED NAMES, DATES, AND PLACES--IN AN INCRIMINATING WAY THAT, ACCORDING TO [redacted] WILL NEVERTHELESS BE DIFFICULT TO SUBSTANTIATE AND WOULD TAKE TIME.

6. (C) [redacted] IS ACUTELY AWARE OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACT CASES SUCH AS THIS ONE HAVE ON INTERNATIONAL OPINION. BUT HE CLAIMS HE IS CERTAIN THAT MS. GAUTIER'S LIFE IS IN DANGER. ONCE A PERSON BECOMES THE OBJECT OF SUSPICION HERE--AND ESPECIALLY AFTER A FORMAL DENUNCIATION IS MADE, WHETHER FOR PERSONAL OR POLITICAL REASONS--THE THREAT TO HIS OR HER LIFE IS IMMEDIATE AND USUALLY FATAL. [redacted] ADMITTED THAT THE POLICE CANNOT PROTECT SUCH PEOPLE. HE WISHES ABOVE ALL TO AVOID AN INCIDENT INVOLVING A LOCALLY WELL-KNOWN FOREIGNER IN WHICH SALVADORAN SECURITY FORCES WOULD CERTAINLY AGAIN BE IMPLICATED BY VIRTUE OF THEIR POOR REPUTATION.

7. (C) WITH THE FULL CONCURRENCE OF [redacted] CONOFF INFORMED MS. GAUTIER OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AND SUGGESTED THE BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE TO DEPART THE COUNTRY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HER FATHER, MOTHER, AND NIECE ARE VISITING MS. GAUTIER AT HER HOME IN LA LIBERTAD. THEY ARE BEING KEPT UP TO DATE BY TELEPHONE. CHARGE CHAPIN HAS BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR, RESIDENT IN SAN JOSE, AND HE RAISED THIS CASE WITH PRESIDENT DUARTE THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 1. THE PRESIDENT, WHO WAS WELL INFORMED ABOUT MS. GAUTIER'S DETENTION, GUARANTEED HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION TO THE MATTER. EMBASSY OFFICERS ARE IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR AND CONSUL IN SAN JOSE.
CHAPIN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/IR
REVIEWED BY [redacted] DATE 8 JUL 1982
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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